

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PLANS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF BROAD GAUGE RAILWAY FROM SOVIET
FRONTIER INTO POLAND

REF: A) MOSCOW 1690, B) MOSCOW 0857

1. SUMMARY: SOVIET ECONOMIC PRESS REPORTS CONCLUSION OF NEGOTIATIONS

FOR CONSTRUCTION OF 400 KILOMETER BROAD-GAUGE RAILWAY LINE FROM
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SOVIET FRONTIER TO STEEL PRODUCTION COMPLEX NOW BEING BUILT AT

KATOWICE, POLAND. LINE WILL BE BUILT BY POLES USING SOVIET EQUIPMENT. IT WILL FACILITATE SOVIET ASSISTANCE IN CONSTRUCTION OF KATOWICE STEEL COMPLEX, ALSO PER-

MIT MORE RAPID DELIVERY OF SOVIET IRON ORE AND SOVIET IMPORT OF POLISH COAL AND RAW MATERIALS. EMBASSY REGARDS PROJECT AS SIGNIFICANT

INDICATION OF PROGRESS IN SOVIET/CEMA PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF CEMA TRANSPORT SYSTEM AND FOR TIGHTER ECONOMIC INTEGRATION. END SUMMARY.

2. TASS VESTNIK MAY 10 REPORTS CONCLUSION OF SOVIET-POLISH NEGOTIATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF NEW WIDE-GAUGE RAILWAY RUNNING FROM SOVIET FRONTIER 400 KILOMETERS WESTWARD TO POLISH CITY OF KATOWICE. FINAL AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED WARSAW AT END OF MAY. MAIN PURPOSE OF NEW LINE SAID TO BE FACILITATION OF SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO POLAND IN CONSTRUCTION OF STEEL MILL COMPLEX AT KATOWICE AND -- WHEN COMPLEX IS OPERATING -- IN DELIVERY OF SOVIET IRON ORE. ACCORDING TO STATEMENT MADE BY OFFICIAL OF SOVIET STATE COMMITTEE FOR FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS, LINE WILL PERMIT DIRECT TRANSPORT TO KATOWICE FROM USSR OF ABOUT FIFTEEN MILLION TONS OF IRON ORE PER YEAR.

POLISH SHIPMENTS TO USSR OVER LINE WILL INCLUDE ANTHRACITE COAL, RAW MATERIALS, STEEL PRODUCTS. IT WILL ALSO, ACCORDING TO TASS, CONTRIBUTE TO PLANNED COORDINATION OF STEEL INDUSTRY IN ACCORDANCE WITH CEMA DIRECTIVES.

3. UNDER JOINT AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED, CONSTRUCTION OF LINE ON POLISH TERRITORY WILL BE CARRIED OUT AND FINANCED BY POLISH ORGANIZATIONS. USSR WILL PROVIDE RAILS, EQUIPMENT, CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS, LOCOMOTIVES AND ROLLING STOCK. SOVIET AND POLISH EXPERTS WILL WORK TOGETHER IN DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT.

4. EMBASSY REGARDS THIS PROJECT AS SIGNIFICANT EVIDENCE OF SOVIET PLANS TO MOVE FORWARD ON IMPROVEMENT OF INTERNAL LAND TRANSPORT LINES WITHIN CEMA-EAST EUROPEAN AREA. AS REPORTED REFTEL B, DEVELOPMENT OF RAILWAY LINKS BETWEEN EASTERN EUROPE AND USSR IS MAJOR CEMA TARGET FOR 1976-1980 PERIOD. NEW LINE TO KATOWICE WILL BE SECOND EXTENSION OF SOVIET BROAD-GAUGE RAIL SYSTEM INTO EASTERN EUROPE, FIRST BEING LINE FROM SOVIET-CZECHOSLOVAK FRONTIER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO STEEL PLANT AT KOSICE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, A DISTANCE OF ABOUT 90 KILOMETERS. THE IMPLICATIONS WHICH THESE LINES HAVE FOR SOVIET AND CEMA OBJECTIVES FOR ECONOMIC INTEGRATION ARE OBVIOUS, BOTH IN DEVELOPMENT OF UNIFIED CEMA METALLURGICAL INDUSTRY AND IN BROADER CONTEXT OF ENERGY AND RAW MATERIAL SUPPLY. STOESSEL

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